IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A controlled release pellet comprising:

a) an inert core that is water soluble or

water swellable;

b) a drug layer applied to the inert core comprising:

i) ~~a beta$_1$-adrenergic blocking agent~~, metoprolol or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof; and

ii) ~~optionally~~ a binder;

c) a controlled release coating surrounding the

drug layer, wherein said coating comprises

i) a water insoluble film forming polymer;

ii) a channeling agent; and

iii) optionally an emulsifier.

2. (cancelled).

3. (original) A controlled release pellet as defined in Claim 1, wherein the inert core has a diameter that is less than 30 mesh.

4. (original) A controlled release pellet as defined in Claim 1, wherein the inert core has a diameter that is less than 40 mesh.

5. (original) A controlled release pellet as defined in Claim 1, wherein the inert core has a diameter of about 30 to 200 mesh.

6. (original) A controlled release pellet as defined in Claim 1, wherein the inert core has a diameter of about 40 to 120 mesh.

7. (original) A controlled release pellet as defined in Claim 1, wherein the inert core has a diameter of about 60 to 80 mesh.

8. (original) A controlled release pellet as defined in Claim 1, wherein the inert core is water soluble.

9. (original) A controlled release pellet as defined in Claim 1, wherein the inert core is a sugar seed.

10. (original) A controlled release pellet as defined in Claim 1, wherein the inert core is water swellable

11. (original) A controlled release pellet as defined in Claim 10, wherein the inert core is microcrystalline cellulose.

12. (currently amended) The controlled release pellet as defined in Claim 1, wherein the binder is selected from the group consisting of polyvinyl pyrrolidone, hydroxyethyl cellulose, hydroxypropyl cellulose, [H]hydroxypropyl methylcellulose, polyacrylate, ethylcellulose, or mixtures of the thereof.

13. (original) The controlled release pellet as defined in Claim 12, wherein the binder is hydroxypropyl methylcellulose.

14. (original) The controlled release pellet as defined in Claim 1, wherein the drug layer further comprises a surfactant.

15. (original) The controlled release pellet as defined in Claim 14, wherein the surfactant is selected from the group consisting of fatty acids, chelating agents, bile salts or mixtures thereof; capric acid, oleic acid and their monoglycerides, alkyl sulfates, sodium lauryl sulfate, sodium dodecyl sulfate, polysorbate 80, citric acid and phytic acid.

16. (original) The controlled release pellet as defined in Claim 15, wherein the surfactant is polysorbate 80.

17. (original) The controlled release pellet as defined in Claim 1, wherein the controlled release coating comprises a water insoluble or slightly water permeable polymer.

18. (original) The controlled release pellet as defined in Claim 1, wherein the controlled release coating comprises a water insoluble film-forming polymer selected from the group consisting of cellulose acetate, cellulose acetate butyrate, ethyl cellulose, hyrdoxypropyl cellulose acetate, hydroxypropyl methylphthalate and cellulose acetate phthalate or mixtures thereof.

19. (original) The controlled release pellet as defined in Claim 18, wherein the water insoluble film-forming polymer is cellulose acetate butyrate.

20. (original) The controlled release pellet as defined in Claim 1, wherein the controlled release coating further comprises a channeling agent.

21. (original) The controlled release pellet as defined in Claim 20, wherein the channeling agent is selected from the group consisting of sodium chloride, potassium chloride, sucrose, sorbitol, mannitol, polyethylene glycol, Eudragit® S100, propylene glycol, hydroxypropyl cellulose, hydroxypropyl methycellulose, hydroxypropyl methycellulose phthalate, cellulose acetate phthalate, polyvinyl alcohols, cellulose acetate butyrate, methacrylic acid copolymers, zein and mixtures thereof.

22. (original) The controlled release pellet as defined in Claim 20, wherein said channeling agent is an enteric polymer.

23. (original) The controlled release pellet as defined in Claim 22, wherein the channeling agent is a methacrylic acid copolymer.

24. (original) The controlled release pellet as defined in Claim 1, wherein the controlled release coating further comprises an emulsifying agent.

25. (original) The controlled release pellet as defined in Claim 24, wherein the emulsifier is selected from the group consisting of phospholipids, propylene glycol, polysorbates, poloxamer, glyceryl monostearate, other pharmaceutical emulsifiers or mixtures thereof.

26. (original) The controlled release pellet as defined in Claim 24, wherein the emulsifier is a poloxamer.

27. (original) The controlled release pellet as defined in Claim 1, wherein the controlled release coating further comprises a plasticizer.

28. (original) The controlled release pellet as defined in Claim 27, wherein the plasticizer is selected from the group consisting of polyethylene glycol, propylene glycol, glycerol, triacetin, dimethyl phthalate, diethyl phthalate, dibutyl phthalate, dibutyl sebacate, triethyl citrate, tributyl citrate, triethyl acetyl citrate, castor oil, poloxamer and varying percentages of acetylated monoglycerides.

29. (currently amended) An oral pharmaceutical tablet that comprises the controlled release pellet as defined in claim [2] 1.

30. (currently amended) An oral pharmaceutical capsule that comprises the controlled release pellet as defined in claim [2] 1.

31. (currently amended) The controlled release pellet defined in Claim [2] 1 that exhibits the following dissolution profile when tested in a USP Type 2 apparatus at 75 rpm and 37°C in a phosphate buffer with a pH of 7.5,

0-40% of the metoprolol is released after 2 hours;
5-50% of the metoprolol is released after 4 hours;
25-80% of the metoprolol is released after 8 hours;
not less than 50% of the metoprolol is released after
16 hours.

32. (currently amended) The controlled release pellet defined in Claim [2] 1 that exhibits the following dissolution profile when tested in a USP Type 2 apparatus at 75 rpm and 37°C in a phosphate buffer with a pH of 7.5,

0-25% of the metoprolol is released after 2 hours;

10-45% of the metoprolol is released after 4 hours;

35-75% of the metoprolol is released after 8 hours;

not less than 75% of the metoprolol is released after 16 hours.

33. (original) The oral pharmaceutical tablet that is defined in Claim 29 that further comprises an immediate release form of metoprolol.

34. (original) The oral pharmaceutical capsule that is defined in Claim 30 that further comprises an immediate release form of a metoprolol.

35. (original) The oral pharmaceutical tablet as defined in Claim 33 that exhibits the following dissolution profile when tested in a USP Type 2 apparatus at 75 rpm and 37°C in a phosphate buffer with a pH of 7.5,

0-50% of the metoprolol is released after 2 hours;

10-60% of the metoprolol is released after 4 hours;

25-80% of the metoprolol is released after 8 hours;

not less than 50% of the metoprolol is released after 16 hours.

36. (original) The oral pharmaceutical tablet as defined in claim 33 that exhibits the following dissolution profile when tested in a USP Type 2 apparatus at 75 rpm and 37°C in a phosphate buffer with a pH of 7.5,

10-40% of the metoprolol is released after 2 hours;

20-50% of the metoprolol is released after 4 hours;

35-75% of the metoprolol is released after 8 hours;

not less than 60% of the metoprolol is released after 16 hours.

37. (original) The oral pharmaceutical capsule as defined in Claim 34 that exhibits the following dissolution profile when tested in a USP Type 2 apparatus at 75 rpm and 37°C in a phosphate buffer with a pH of 7.5,

0-50% of the metoprolol is released after 2 hours;

10-60% of the metoprolol is released after 4 hours;

25-80% of the metoprolol is released after 8 hours;

not less than 50% of the metoprolol is released after 16 hours.

38. (original) The oral pharmaceutical capsule as defined in Claim 37 that exhibits the following dissolution profile when tested in a USP Type 2 apparatus at 75 rpm and 37°C in a phosphate buffer with a pH of 7.5,

10-40% of the metoprolol is released after 2 hours;

20-50% of the metoprolol is released after 4 hours;

35-75% of the metoprolol is released after 8 hours;

not less than 60% of the metoprolol is released after 16 hours.

39. (original) The pharmaceutical tablet as defined in Claim 33 that exhibits a peak plasma level between 3 and 8 hours after administration.

40. (original) The pharmaceutical tablet as defined in Claim 39 that exhibits a peak plasma level between about 4.5 hours to about 7.5 hours after administration.

41. (original) The pharmaceutical capsule as defined in Claim 34 that exhibits a peak plasma level between 3 and 8 hours after administration.

42. (original) The pharmaceutical capsule as defined in Claim 41 that exhibits a peak plasma level between about 4.5 hours to about 7.5 hours after administration.

43. (original) The pharmaceutical tablet as defined in Claim 33 that exhibits a C_{max} of less than 300 ng/ml.

44. (original) The pharmaceutical tablet as defined in Claim 43 that exhibits a C_{max} of less than 275 ng/ml.

45. (original) The pharmaceutical tablet as defined in Claim 44 that exhibits a C_{max} of between 200 ng/ml and 275 ng/ml.

46. (original) The pharmaceutical capsule as defined in Claim 34 that exhibits a C_{max} of less than 300 ng/ml.

47. (original) The pharmaceutical capsule as defined in Claim 46 that exhibits a C_{max} of less than 275 ng/ml.

48. (original) The pharmaceutical capsule as defined in Claim 47 that exhibits a C_{max} of between 200 ng/ml and 275 ng/ml.

49. (currently amended) A controlled release pellet consisting essentially of:

a) an inert core that is water soluble or water swellable;

b) a drug layer applied to the inert core comprising:

i) ~~a beta$_1$-adrenergic blocking agent~~ metoprolol succinate;

ii) a binder; and

iii) optionally a surfactant;

c) a controlled release coating surrounding the drug layer comprising:

i) a water insoluble film forming polymer;

ii) a channeling agent; and

iii) optionally an emulsifier.

50. (cancelled).

51. (original) A controlled release pellet as defined in Claim 49, wherein the inert core has a diameter that is less than 30 mesh.

52. (original) A controlled release pellet as defined in Claim 49, wherein the inert core has a diameter that is less than 40 mesh.

53. (original) A controlled release pellet as defined in Claim 49, wherein the inert core has a diameter of about 30 to 200 mesh.

54. (original) A controlled release pellet as defined in Claim 49, wherein the inert core has a diameter of about 40 to 120 mesh.

55. (original) A controlled release pellet as defined in Claim 49, wherein the inert core has a diameter of about 60 to 80 mesh.

56. (original) A controlled release pellet as defined in Claim 49, wherein the inert core is water soluble.

57. (original) A controlled release pellet as defined in Claim 49, wherein the inert core is a sugar seed.

58. (original) A controlled release pellet as defined in Claim 49, wherein the inert core is water swellable.

59. (original) A controlled release pellet as defined in Claim 49, wherein the inert core is microcrystalline cellulose.

60. (original) An oral pharmaceutical tablet that comprises the controlled release pellet as defined in claim 50.

61. (original) An oral pharmaceutical capsule that comprises the controlled release pellet as defined in claim 50.

62. (original) The oral pharmaceutical tablet that is defined in claim 60 that further comprises an immediate release form of metoprolol.

63. (original) The oral pharmaceutical capsule that is defined in claim 61 that further comprises an immediate release form of metoprolol.

64. (currently amended) A process for preparing a controlled release ~~beta$_1$-adrenergic blocking agent~~ pellet comprising:

a) dissolving or suspending ~~a beta$_1$-adrenergic blocking agent~~ metoprolol or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof in an aqueous medium;

b) applying the aqueous medium with the dissolved or suspended metoprolol onto a water soluble or water swellable inert core to create a drug layer on the inert core;

c) applying a controlled release coating to the drug layer.

65. (cancelled).